

# Improving the quality of an utterance

## Length, Complexity and Natural Value

We encourage students to speak, and then to put more and more natural sounding words together throughout the day. We create opportunities and take opportunities to prompt students to tell us what they want and need during eating times, play time and work time. Desired objects like food, materials and favorite items are not made readily available to the student. Once the student is visually aware of the desired item, they are encouraged to ask for it. Following is a general sequence of ever improving utterances. For example, you may first choose to target the addition of the "please" tag at the end of the utterance instead of the nametag. When prompting for increased length, it's important to have the child generate connected words. Cueing word by word defeats this outcome. Echoing back and forth is an unnatural exchange and something we avoid. Often a child will hear a whole utterance cue, and only offer a few of the words connected. Fine, that's evidence of an emerging pattern.

Level 1: I want (thing).

Level 2: I'd like some (thing). (We generally use the word like in conversation when we mean want or need).

Level 3: (name), I'd like some (thing).

Level 4: (name), I'd like some (thing), please.

